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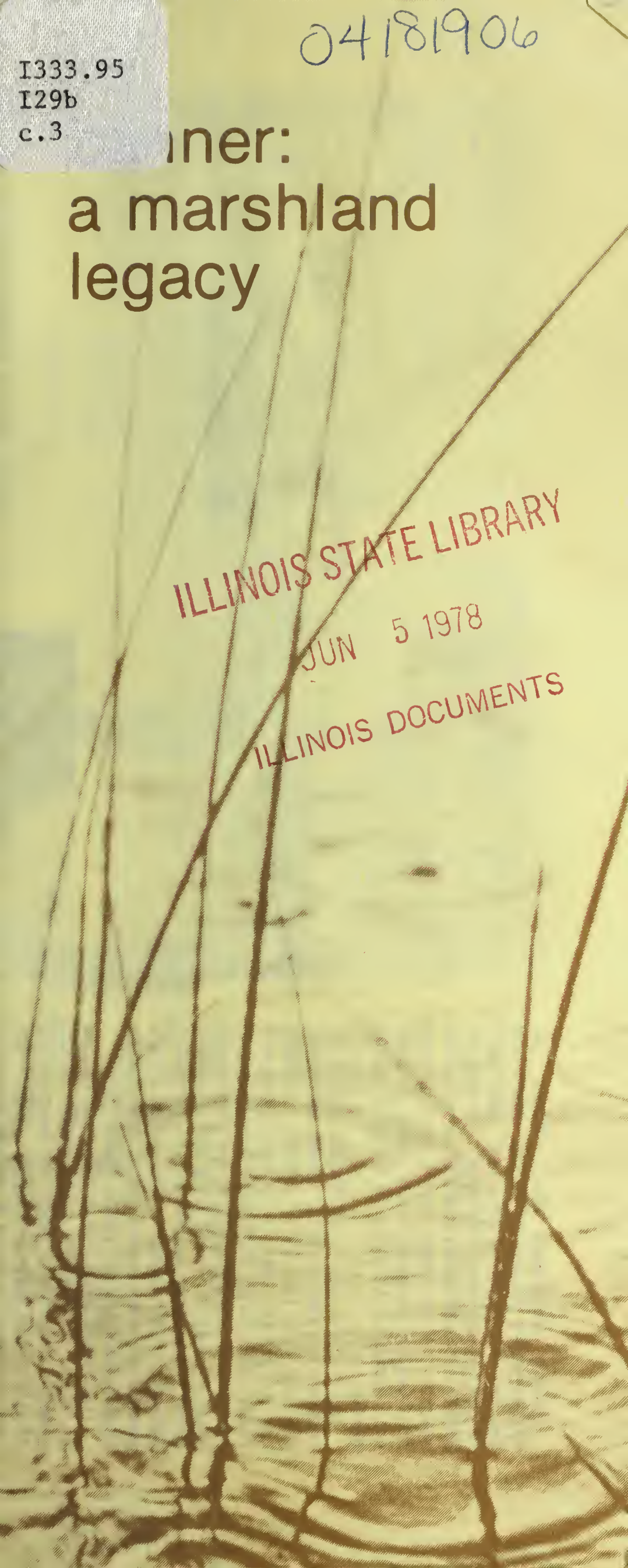
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a marshland legacy

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Driving southwest along Route 24, twenty miles outside of Peoria, you'll find yourself moving through a vast, open tract of strip-mined land. The long, low eastern profile of the Illinois River Valley is dominated by a huge crane which once peeled the land for the coal it held. Now that the land has been stripped of its coal, it lies empty.

But a quiet green wilderness could fill this emptiness. A vast, water-rich home for waterfowl and other forms of wildlife could flourish here. It could become a freshwater marsh. A marsh equal to any of the natural marshes in the 14 state Mississippi Flyway, it would be a major resting point for the great southward migrations of waterfowl each autumn. The marsh would resemble the extensive marshlands as the first Illinois settlers found them.

The marsh would be a place for people to enjoy. Fishermen could catch bass, bluegill and other species stocked in over 1100 acres of pure lake waters. Canoeists could silently explore some 55 miles of shoreline. Backpackers and hikers would find out-of-the-way places with primitive campsites along 33 miles of trails. Scouts, school children and adults would be guided to a greater understanding and acceptance of the natural world by a trained naturalist.

But how can all this happen when the land remains barren?

The Illinois Department of Conservation proposes to reclaim about 4000 acres of the land and restore it to a natural appearance. The ravines and potholes of the old strip mine will be allowed to fill with rain water creating a large system of lakes, channels and ponds. An ideal and diverse marshland, can be created. The remaining land will be restored as a wild prairie, similar to that which once covered much of Illinois.

The 5141 acre project will be called the Banner Marsh State Wildlife Area. Plans for development of the area include:

- ▷ Scenic overlooks on the bluffs above the marsh. Even senior and handicapped citizens will be able to enjoy the breathtaking beauty of the vast marshland below:
- ▷ A visitor center with exhibits that explain the ecological significance of the marsh:
- ▷ A camping area located on bluffs near the southwestern corner of the wildlife area. It will have 200 camper/trailer sites and a larger number of tent sites compatible with the primitive nature of the marsh:
- ▷ Two canoe and small boat access areas. In addition, more than 100 acres of picnic areas with 260 picnic tables, two shelters, wildlife observation platforms, wells and parking facilities will be constructed.

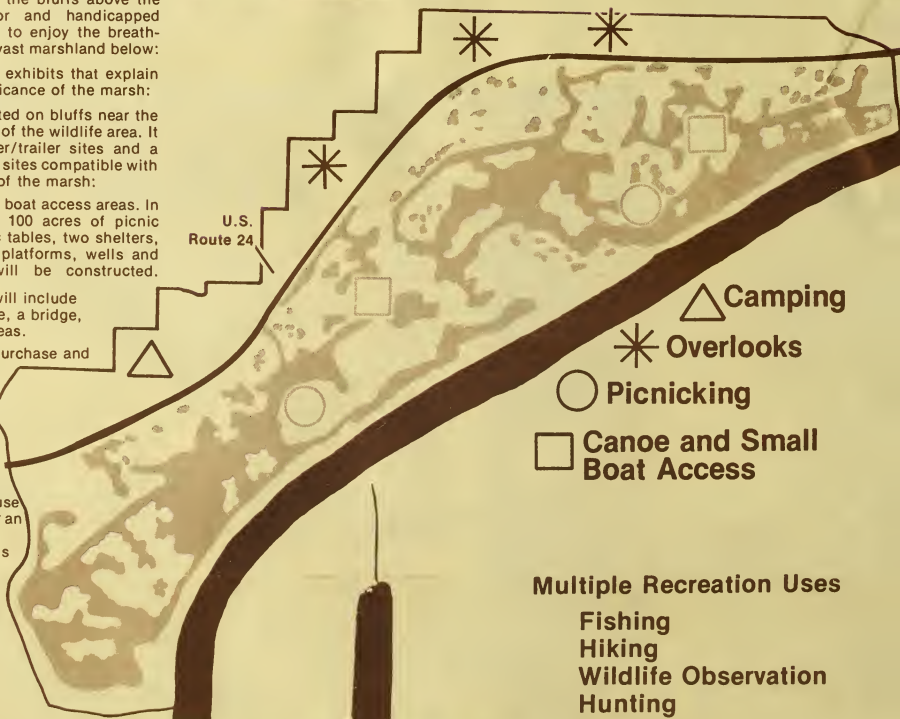
Other development will include a fish cleaning house, a bridge, wells and parking areas.

How much will the purchase and development of the land cost? Recent estimates place the total expense for the entire project at \$7.7 million in 1976 dollars. When one considers 200,000 to 500,000 people will use the area each year for an infinite future, the marsh development is a sound investment.



But the marsh will provide much more to the people who use it.

- ▷ It will give children a chance to see nesting ducks and geese lead their young through the cattails on warm spring mornings.
- ▷ A father and son can wander through the prairie to fish together in a secluded cove.
- ▷ Whole families can hike along the winding shoreline or canoe through quiet water on a September afternoon and watch flocks of blue-wing teal feeding in the shallows.
- ▷ Waterfowl hunters, among the most dedicated of conservationists, can thrill to the sight of mallards flying in on the first gray light of a November dawn.



Multiple Recreation Uses

**Fishing
Hiking
Wildlife Observation
Hunting
Picnicking**

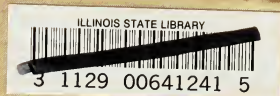
What remains to be done to make the marsh a reality? Some land must be purchased, some people must be convinced of the value of the project, and the state legislature must allot funds for the project. Interested citizens can help to bring the proposed Banner Marsh Wildlife Area to life, simply by telling friends, neighbors and others about the project. . . and the great benefits it could bring to every citizen. By working together, we can have a primitive marshland recreation area and continue Illinois' marshland legacy.



conservation...

can be defined as the wise use of our natural environment: it is, in the highest form of national thrift—the prevention of waste and despoilment while preserving, improving and renewing the quality and usefulness of all our resources.

—President John F. Kennedy
Conservation Message to Congress 1962



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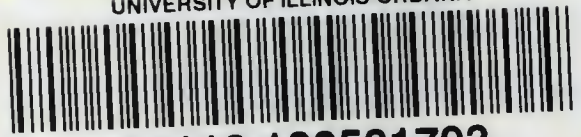
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